

RECORD VERSION

**STATEMENT BY
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**INSTALLATION RESILIENCY: LESSONS LEARNED FROM WINTER STORM URI
AND BEYOND**

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Introduction

Chairman Garamendi, Ranking Member Lamborn and distinguished members of the Subcommittee on Readiness, thank you for this opportunity to testify on the topic of installation resiliency, and especially in light of the recent events of Winter Storm Uri.

I look forward to providing an update and addressing your questions on the Army's efforts in regards to enhanced resiliency measures across Army installations in support of the Army's three priorities—People, Readiness, and Modernization. On behalf of Acting Secretary Whitley and General McConville, thank you for your strong support and continued commitment to our Soldiers, Families, Army Civilians, Retirees, and Veterans.

Winter Storm Uri

The extreme weather events of February 13-17, 2021, during Winter Storm Uri, enabled our installations to demonstrate their abilities to plan, command and control, and execute contingency operations. Over those four long days, Army installations in Kansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas experienced a combination of damaging ice, snow, and frigid temperatures that shattered national weather records.

As a result of the winter storm, 694 installation facilities, including 483 barracks and 1,366 privatized homes across four installations (Fort Sill, Fort Riley, Fort Polk, and Fort Hood) were damaged in some manner. However, while 15,215 total privatized homes at these 4 locations were impacted, only 145 Families were temporarily displaced, and as of March 17, 2021, just 31 Families remain displaced as repairs are being made. I am very proud of our installation commanders, and their close coordination with our Residential Communities Initiative partners, especially Corvias, Lendlease, BBC, and Lincoln, to prepare for and immediately respond to the needs of our Soldiers and their Families following the storm. Without this collaborative, proactive leadership, the storm impacts would have been much worse. I can say with confidence

and personal experience that our military installations fared better than the local communities due to the attention paid to contingency planning to maintain energy and water supplies.

Each affected installation and their respective partners prepared for such an event by maintaining and jointly exercising their severe weather contingency plans. As an example, Fort Polk conducts an annual weather exercise as it prepares for hurricane season. This exercise was key to Fort Polk quickly recovering from two hurricanes last year, and played a key role in both preparing for, and recovering from, Winter Storm Uri.

Furthermore, the entire Army team, to include Senior Commanders, privatized housing partners, utilities privatization contractors, the Army Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES), the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA), and installation tenants, took proactive steps ahead of the storm to minimize impact. Priority was placed on the life, health, and safety of personnel, followed by protection of facilities and equipment.

Immediately after the storm, General Ed Daly, Commander of U.S. Army Materiel Command, traveled to Fort Sill and I traveled to Fort Hood to assess storm damage. While several facilities sustained moderate to significant damage, our installation team took rapid action to contract for repairs and mitigation in support of our Soldiers and Families. The Army continues to surge repair efforts to these four installations. To date, we have repaired all critical infrastructure and have completed more than 50% of the total repairs required. Ultimately, due to our installations' preparations, we were able to immediately account to Army senior leaders and senior mission commanders the total impact to installation facilities and personnel, mitigating immediate readiness risks.

Lessons Learned

1) *Deliberate Planning and Holistic Response*. Our planning effort in preparation for the winter storms was thorough and clearly mitigated the storms' impacts. For example, non-winterized water systems were shut down ahead of time where possible. Following

the storms, we leveraged a holistic, enterprise approach, maximizing the use of contracts and Army Corps of Engineers efforts to surge maintenance teams and accelerate repair efforts. We continue to conduct daily coordination sessions to assess recovery operations and to share lessons learned. I am proud of the herculean efforts of our installation public works and emergency management staff, the Army's privatized housing partners, and the utilities privatization contractors, all of which rapidly responded to crisis and put us on a path for a quick recovery.

2) *Age and Condition of Facilities.* Aging and poor facilities and systems failed first and most often. I visited Fort Hood and saw firsthand the air conditioning and heating systems in barracks which failed largely due being old and antiquated. For many of these systems, it is difficult to even find repair parts. Additionally, many of our facilities had exposed water pipes and fire suppression systems that, due the freezing weather, failed and led to burst pipes, causing significant water damage. Our Army leaders are aware of the challenges with our facilities, especially our barracks. As a result, they have made renovating or replacing barracks one of their top infrastructure priorities. As part of the Army's overall modernization effort, we are taking steps to modernize our installations to build resiliency and ensure our Soldiers and Families have the quality Army communities they deserve.

Moving Forward

1) *Installation Resiliency.* The Army's recently published Installation Strategy defines a clear end state: **modern, resilient, sustainable installations . . . that enhance strategic readiness in a contested Multi-Domain Operations battlespace while providing quality facilities, services, and support to our Soldiers, Families, and Civilians.** As part of the efforts to achieve this end state, Army Materiel Command is leading the Army's effort in executing the Army's Installation Energy and Water Strategic Plan, in close coordination with Headquarters, Department of the Army G-9 and the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, which focuses on building energy and water infrastructure that is resilient,

efficient, and affordable. Our installations are preparing Installation Energy and Water Plans which both assess the status of our current energy and water systems and, more importantly, identify opportunities to increase resiliency of these systems across our installation footprint. The Army is on track to complete the majority of these plans this calendar year. Additionally, AMC is partnering with the Department of Energy Pacific Northwest National Lab to operationalize these plans into prioritized energy and water projects which will compete for resources. To execute these plans, the Army is pursuing alternative financing, including Energy Savings Performance Contracts and Utility Energy Savings Contracts. These contracts allow the Army to partner with an energy service company in order to leverage their expertise in energy efficiency and cost reductions. The Army already has 99 of these energy savings contracts in place and is exploring opportunities to expand their use.

2) *Army's Facility Investment Plan (FIP)*. The FIP is the Army's holistic infrastructure plan that prioritizes facility improvements IAW Army priorities over a 10 year span. The FIP captures all facility construction, restoration, and modernization requirements for the Active Component. This plan is critical to installation resiliency as it allows Army leaders to visualize the totality of the Army's infrastructure requirements and thus enables our leaders to focus resources in support of Army priorities.

Conclusion

Winter Storm Uri, in many ways, was a "once in a decade" type of event. Our proactive and engaged leadership, coupled with collaborative partner engagement, enabled the Army to minimize the impacts of the storm and allowed for rapid transition to recovery. We will capitalize on the lessons learned from Winter Storm Uri to be even more prepared for similar events in the future.

We will continue to drive on executing the Army Installation Strategy, which established the guiding principles of achieving modern, resilient, sustainable installations in support of the National Defense Strategy. The Army Installation Strategy

describes the Army's objective: "To the maximum extent feasible, each installation will have resilient power, water and communications systems—prioritized by mission requirement." The Army will modernize installations to support an increasingly modern force with sustainable and resilient utilities and services.

I am incredibly proud of the Army team who works hard to maintain and improve readiness of the force with quality installations and services. They meet the requirements of our national security mission while taking care of the Soldiers, Families, civilian professionals and others who come through our gates every day. Their efforts to support Soldiers and their Families, maintain and improve our facilities, and protect our force deserve the highest praise.

Chairman Garamendi, Ranking Member Lamborn, thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee. I look forward to your questions and continuing to work with your offices to keep you apprised of the Army's progress toward achieving our end state of modernized installations and platforms that protect, support, and enable the Total Army.

Thank you for your continued support of the Army, its Soldiers, Families, Civilians, Retirees, and Veterans.